

# Name your Power of Attorney before Jan. 19, says Pasanen

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK  
The Acton Tanner

Reverend Helen Pasanen, of Acton, is scared.

The Evangelical Church Alliance Minister is also angry with what she calls dramatic government intervention in the affairs of people unable to run their lives due to an accident or illness.

Bill 108 - The Substitute Decisions Act - is expected to become law in Ontario Jan. 19 and Pasanen urges all Acton residents to grant a trusted family member Power of Attorney before that date, or risk have the Province intervene and appoint a Trustee for anyone unable to run their own affairs.

The legislation was drafted to help handle the affairs of people who become incompetent, who don't have any family, and to protect a minority of older people being forced to grant Power of

Attorney to greedy relations who want access to their assets.

Pasanen's worst-case scenario for anyone who has not named a Power of Attorney is a very real nightmare for an Acton couple.

"The brother-in-law of a friend of mine became incompetent. The government stepped in and now the family is worried that if he dies, they won't even be able to pay for his funeral because all of his assets have been seized," Pasanen said on Monday.

"When the man's doctor told the government that he was incompetent, a Public Trustee was appointed," Pasanen said, "and the Trustee took over the man's bank account, pension plan and everything else."

Pasanen said the proposed legislation and its far-reaching implications were raised at a recent Evangelical Church Alliance con-

vention, where Ministers were asked to inform their congregations of the new legislation, and offer advice on how people can protect themselves from it.

Pasanen has taken out ads in *The Tanner* and dropped information sheets in local mail boxes. She says she will continue to notify as many people as she can before the deadline.

"I'm a little angry because if a Public Trustee is appointed, then people who have worked hard all their lives would no longer have any control," Pasanen explained.

"Even if the person who becomes incapacitated is married, and the spouse has joint ownership of their home, bank accounts and pensions, the Public Trustee could demand that the assets be sold to pay for the ill or injured person's care. And that could lead to a court fight."

Pasanen said the way to avoid a legal battle is to name the person you trust to manage your assets and health care, should you become unable to do so, before the Jan. 19 deadline.

An Ontario government newspaper ad indicates that you don't need a lawyer to draw up Power of Attorney documents, but Pasanen, an agent for a Woodstock paralegal firm, suggests that people view a 20-minute video that she will lend, at no charge, before taking action.

Pasanen can be reached at 853-3663.

## Seniors wait for permits

It could be six weeks before permits are issued for work to begin to turn the upstairs at Acton arena into a new seniors centre.

"The applications are in the file in the building department and hopefully we will get the go-ahead sooner, not later," said Paul Stover, the Town's Superintendent of Facilities, on Monday.

"We are anxious to get in and do the work necessary so the seniors can move in, but we don't expect any special consideration. We are in the processing line, just like everyone else."

The proposed \$20,000 in renovations at the arena will include construction of a handicapped-assessable washroom, a kitchen and other minor alterations.

## NEWS SHORTS

### Snowball-thrower charged

A Poplar Avenue youth was charged with mischief and breach of probation after he reportedly threw a snowball and cracked the front window of a Church Street home on New Year's Day at about 2 pm.

The homeowner ran out of the house and pursued the 17-year-old. Halton Police were called after the vandal was caught.

### Hit-and-run in Main Street lot

Police are investigating after an unknown vehicle struck an Oldsmobile which was parked in the Acton IGA plaza parking lot on Friday night at approximately 9 pm.

The vehicle, which sustained \$500 in damage, is owned by an Erin resident.

### Bonfire on Fifth Line

Acton fire fighters responded to a fire alarm on the Fifth Line south of Sideroad 22 last Tuesday night.

The fire turned out to be a bonfire set during a field party. Fire fighters extinguished the blaze and returned to the station.

### RIDE charges down from '93

Halton Police laid a total of 22 impaired driving charges in their month-long RIDE program which ended on Sunday.

More than 18,000 vehicles were stopped during the holiday campaign. Last year 15,000-plus autos were pulled over, with 26 impaired charges laid.

There were 18 12-hour suspensions handed out and 232 warnings issued in last month's initiative.

### Chamber Open House Jan. 19

The Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce will be hosting an Open House at their new offices at 170 Guelph St. in Georgetown, from 4 to 7 pm on Jan. 19.

The Chamber will be welcoming all members, the public and Mayor Marilyn Serjeantson along with municipal council members.

For information call the Chamber at 877-7119.

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## QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"I'm angry because if a Trustee is appointed, people who have worked hard all their lives would no longer have any control."

— Rev. Helen Pasanen, *Bill 108 critic*, Page 2

## DID YOU KNOW?

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